the RARS Exciter

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

RARS

Worldwide Friendship

May 2004 Number 397

Before RARSfest

Social

During RARSfest

The Exciter

The ***Exciter*** is the monthly newsletter of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. It is available in both printed and electronic form. The printed version is mailed to members just before each club meeting. The electronic form, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, is e-mailed about a week earlier.

We solicit both articles and advertising. The deadline for submissions is the day after the monthly meeting. Contact the Editor.

The views contained in the Exciter are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society.

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc. (RARS) was founded in 1969 and continues to serve and support the Amateur Radio community in the greater Triangle area. In 1999, we incorporated a new RARS, and obtained 501(c)(3) Non-Profit tax status.

The objectives of the club are to promote worldwide friendship through Amateur Radio; to be of public service by providing radio communications in times of disaster, emergency, or civic need; to educate members in radio technique; and to provide training classes to assist in obtaining Amateur Radio licenses.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is eligible to apply for membership. Dues for regular licensed amateurs are $18.00 per year (from July 1 through June 30). Additional immediate family members pay $5.00 each per year. Dues for licensed amateurs older than 59 or younger than 16 are $12.00 per year. Dues for non-licensed Associate members are $9.00 per year.

Applications for membership may be obtained from the treasurer or the RARS web site (www.rars.org).

EXCITER EDITOR: **Denyse Walter KG4CXR 919-468-5358** kg4cxr@nc.rr.com

SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: **Andy Peterson NI4S 919-845-6251** ni4s@arrl.net

VICE-PRESIDENT **Dick Bitner W8HYD 919-872-6802** ncsol@bellsouth.net

SECRETARY: **Virginia Enzor KG4PFA 919-469-8555** kg4pfa@aol.com

TREASURER: **Greg Seamster KE4PAX 919-859-0029** ke4pax@arrl.net

RARS Repeaters in Raleigh:
145.13 (82.5 PL)
146.64
224.64
444.525 (82.5 PL)

WEB SITE www.rars.org

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

A big thanks to everyone for making RARSfest 2004 such a success. I had several people come up to me on Sunday and say how much they enjoy coming to the hamfest and appreciate our hospitality. It wouldn't be possible without the hard work of everyone who volunteered to help out.
Hank K4HM did a great job pulling the team together as usual.

Once again, thanks to everyone who helped out or attended the hamfest. I hope everyone had as good a time as I did.
73 Andy

The Exciter goes to the printer the first Monday after the general meeting. Electronic mailing is the same week. Printing and mailing may vary.

Be sure to use the 145.13 repeater with a PL tone of 82.5.

RALEIGH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY MEETINGS

Date: ***Every first Tuesday of the Month***
Location: ***Forest Hills Baptist Church, at Dixie Trail and Clark Avenue, in Raleigh***
Time: ***7:30pm. Folks start showing up a bit before 7 to chat, brag and eat donuts.***

VE Testing: The RARS VEs will accept walk-in testing at the February, May, August and November RARS meetings, at the RARSfest in April, the Cary Swapfest in July and the JARSfest in November, and following RARS license classes. Please bring a photo ID and the original copy of your current license, plus any CSCEs you have for credit. Please refer to www.rars.org for more information.

Announcements

NEXT RARS MEETINGS:
May 4, 2004 Radio Astronomy

TEARA Meetings
Date: 4th Tuesday of each month
Place: The Meeting Place restaurant in Wendell
Time: 6:00P.M. for Dinner & 6:30P.M. for meeting
Sam Johnson NC4SJ

146.88 145.39, 147.105, & 147.135 Repeaters are supported by PCRN if you would like to donate please make checks payable to:

PCRN
PO Box 12734
Raleigh, NC 27605

More info on PCRN: www.pcrn.net

NEW NET ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT
220 net at 9:30 every Wednesday night
PL tone 88.5 224.880

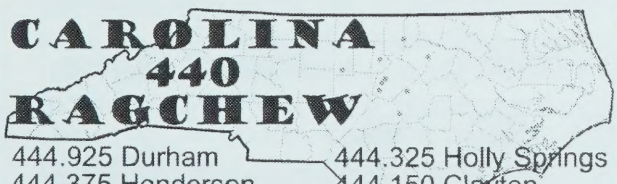
RARS MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership renewals and new membership dues can be paid at RARS meetings, on-line at the RARS website, or mailed to the RARS treasurer. Mail To:

Greg Seamster
RARS Treasurer
1405 Leanne Court
Raleigh, NC 27606

RARS now accepts credit card payments online for new members and membership renewals. See the RARS website (www.rars.org) for more information. You can join or renew for 1, 2, or 3 years.

CAROLINA 440 RAGCHEW



444.925 Durham
444.375 Henderson
444.775 Cary
444.875 Louisburg
Monday nights at 7:30pm
all PL tones=100.0 Hz

444.325 Holly Springs
444.150 Clayton
444.550 Benson
443.800 Snow Camp
441.725 Raleigh "hub"
Full time linked repeaters

KD4RAA/K4JDR Repeater Group

RARS NEW MEMBERS

March 2004

We would like to welcome our new members to RARS. Thank you for considering us for your amateur radio club.

Del	KQ4MW
Lou	(no license)
Greg	KC4WVC
William	K4WGE
Randy	KI4BRZ
Fletch	N4JZO
Chuck	KI4VZJ

NET REPORTS FOR MARCH 2004

8:00PM DAILY: RARS Evening Net

Participants 392
Traffic 37/31
Time 744 minutes
Sessions 31

8:30PM SAT: Tech & Traders Net
9:00PM MON: SWL/SIG

Participants 49
Traffic 1/1
Time 357 Minutes
Sessions 9

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Minutes of the RARS General Meeting
Tuesday, April 6, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Vice President Dick Bitner, W8HYD, in absence of President Andy Peterson, NI4S.

Visitor Duane Wyatt, WA0MJD, of Hillsborough, NC, was recognized and welcomed.

Treasurer's Report: Greg Seamster, KE4PAX, reported that there are currently 270 members. He recognized the RARSfest preregistration winner of the 50/50 Raffle as Gil Bryant, KG4YJG, and presented him with a check. The RARS budget will be presented to the membership in June for approval.

Hank Montgomery, K4HM, RARSfest chairman, reported on the success of the recent hamfest and thanked all who assisted with this fun event. Special recognition was given to Mary Jo Littlewood, K4MJL, for coordinating the RARSfest Supper/ Social on Saturday night, April 3.

Dick Bitner, W8HYD, introduced guest speaker Linda Ornt, Director of the Triangle Reading Service. Ms. Ornt explained that the Triangle Reading Service provides local news and information for blind, hospitalized, elderly and print impaired persons in the greater Triangle area. She thanked RARS for its donation and fielded questions about the service.

Dick Bitner, W8HYD, then presented the annual awards and thanked the members of the Awards Committee for their work. The awards were as follows:

Plaques: Bernard Blackmon, W4BRB – RARS President 2002-2003
Andy Peterson, NI4S – RARS Vice President, 2003

Life Membership Certificates for original charter members:
Robert B. Corns, K4MC
William C. McDowell, K4CIA
Robert C. Workman. WA4ZZN
Louis B. Alexander, K4BYN
Tom Alexander, WA4OTA
K. H. Bailey, Jr. W4FMN
William K. Sims, W4AK
Carroll V. Willis, Jr., KD4JH
John P. Fried, W4WWD
David Langley, W4YDY
Edward Alderman, WA4PEN

Other Certificates:
Bob Woodson, WX4MMM – RARS NET Net Control Station
Richard Wehe, KF4HQS – RARS NET Net Control Station
Betty Clary, KD4ZVS – RARSfest Asst. Treasurer
Mary Jo Littlewood, K4MJL – RARSfet Supper/Social Chairperson
Sharon Murphy, KD4ACK – RARSfest Supper Helper
Jeff Wittich, AC4ZO – RARS 2004 General Class Code Elmer
Bruce Buck, KC4UQN – RARSfest Talk-In Chairman
Gary Pearce, KN4AQ – RARS Exciter Contributor and ElmerMax
Bloodworth, KO4TV – Faithful Nourishment Provider, RARS Meetings
Glenn Clary, WA4LHE – RARSfest Treasurer
David Crawford, KF4VXJ – Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Wake Cty
Tim Buelmann, W4TIM – Ham Radio in Local Schools Program
Neal Fisher, N4HAF – RARS Annual Field Day Chairman
Denyse Walter, KG4CXR – Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Skywarn
Alan Pitegoff, AB4OZ – RARS At Large Director, 1998-2003
Joe Zobkiw, WA2UZO – RARS Webmaster, 2002 & 2003

(Continued on page 6)

Linda Ornt, Director of the Triangle Reading Service.

Photos by Denyse KG4CXR

Bernard W4BRB & Dick W8HYD

(General Meeting continued from page 5)
Jeff Wittich, AC4ZO, presented certificates from the Royal Order of the Wouff Hong to its newest members.

Bob Condor, K4RLC, showed an amusing video highlighting the RARSfest QBH Contest with the "Hula-Key."

Dick Bitner, W8HYD, informed the membership that the club had received a thank you note from ARRL for its contribution to the combined Spectrum Defense Fund.

Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, presented a video on what BPL looks like and sounds like in the trial area near Raleigh, NC. He encouraged members to share their comments on BPL by writing to the FCC and Progress Energy.

Door prizes were won by Duane Wyatt, WA0MID; Jeff Wittich, AC4ZO; Wayne Blackwell, KD4SLQ; Sharon Murphy, KD4ACK; Ashby Spratley, W5PGX; Hank Montgomery, K4HM; Robert Pierpoint, KG4BDX; and Jonathan Kerfoot, KG4ZVT.

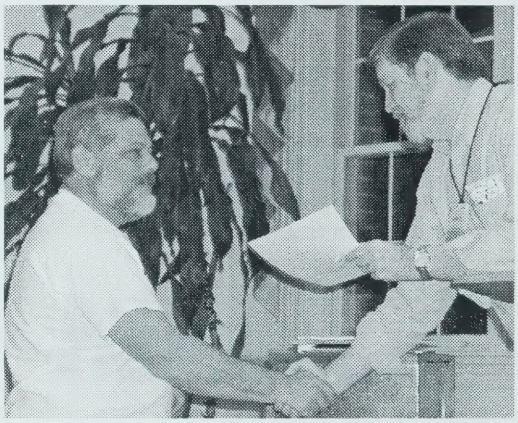
Members were treated to cake and ice cream in recognition of RARS 35th anniversary.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Virginia Enzor, KG4PFA, RARS Secretary

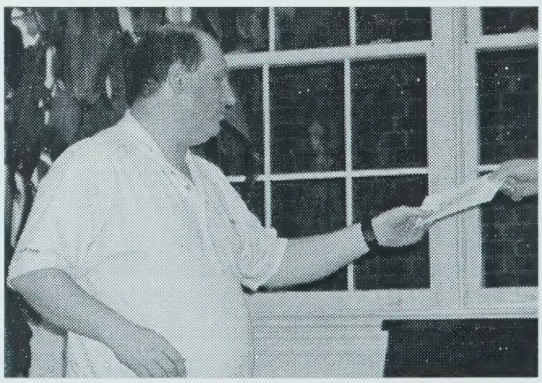
Photos of some of our members receiving various awards as described in the General Meeting notes

Jeff AC4ZO & Dick W8HYD



Alan AB4OZ & Dick W8HYD

David KF4VXJ & Dick W8HYD



Jonathan KG4ZVT receiving door prize

Photos by Gary KN4AQ

LOOKing Back 30 Years

Taken from the May 1974 Exciter

Xvxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xcxpt for onx kxy. Thxrx are 46 kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working makxs thx diffxrxncx. Somxtimxs it sxxms to mx that our group is somxwhat likx my typxwritxr, not all the kxys arx working properly. You may say, "wxll, I am only onx pxrson. It won't makx much diffxrxncx." But you sxx,for thx group to bx xffxctivx nxxds thx participation of xvry pxrson. So thx nxxt timx you think you arx only onx pxrson and that your xffort is not nxxded, rxmxmbxr my typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson and nxxded vxry much.

LOOKing Back 10 Years

Taken from the May 1994 Exciter

A new 220 is on the air. The frequency is 224.8 (input 1.6 standard shirt) and the call is KD4WJD. It's location is in Wendell at the same site as the 442.400+. Power output is 21 watts, and the antenna height is about 165 feet. It's an open machine and is available for all. Gary KN4AQ was recently appointed Public Information Officer of the North Carolina Section of the ARRL by Section Manager Reed Whitten AB4W. The NWS have moved to a new location and that an amateur station has not yet been installed. Coax will be needed. The .64 repeater will be replaced with a Diamond dual-band unit.

THANKS TO 2004 HAMFEST SOCIAL VOLUNTEERS

I want to thank everyone who assisted in any way with the 2004 Hamfest Social on April 3. There were those of you who helped to decorate, who called club members to remind them of the Social, and who assisted the evening of the Hamfest with serving lines, tickets, desserts, and drinks. I really am so grateful for your great spirit of cooperation and willingness to do whatever was needed. Those who prepared the food deserve a warm round of applause for your generosity and your culinary arts! Several people approached me the evening of the Social and the next day and said we should consider putting together a recipe book of items prepared by our great cooks. I am going to think about this.....there were some great food items served that evening!! What a nice gesture for several guests to suggest a recipe book. All of you who contributed items of food should take a bow.

Again, my sincere thanks for all of you who helped in any way with the RARS 2004 Hamfest Social. I am beginning to think about next year's event. If you have suggestions, please share them with me. New and fresh ideas are always welcomed. I can be reached at 872-6555 or mjlittlewood@earthlink.net.

Mary Jo Littlewood, K4MJL

2004 Hamfest Social Chairman

AWARDS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO ENDURED THE WOUFF HONG CERMONY AT RARSFEST

PRESENTATIONS WERE GIVEN BY JEFF AC4ZO

Mary Jo K4MJL

Bob K4RLC

Jim KI4BZB

Gilmer KG4YJG

Hank K4HM

Jonathan KG4ZVT

Photos by Gary KN4AQ

From L to R - Jonathan KG4ZVT, Mike KC4WUH, Jim KI4BZB, Bob W4RLC, Hank K4HM, Dennis K4DAM, Neal N4HAF, Mary Jo K4MJL, and Gil KG4YJG. Also, receiving Certificates but not pictured were: Dick Bitner W8HYD, Rod Gilvey KI4DCN, Denyse Walter KG4CXR, Selene Montgomery, KG4RMT, and Virginia Enzor KG4PFA.

RARS Board Meeting February 23, 2004

Board Members Present
K4HF, K4HM, W8HYD, NI4S, KN4AQ, AC4ZO, K1RCB, KG4RMT

Meeting called to order at 8:00 by NI4S

Approved January Board Minutes, moved approval by K4HF, Hank, K4HM noted a minor correction in the Hamfest report, changed sentence to "Radios will be given as prizes."

Officers Reports:

No Treasurers Report.

Vice Presidents Report: (W8HYD) Discussed March meeting with NWS as speaker and set program for May meeting. April will be RARS birthday celebration.

Committee Reports:

FM: No Report
Nets: No Report
Web: No Report
Membership: No Report

Hamfest: (K4HM) Meeting 2/23/04, discusses raffle, info booth, RARS table, 50/50 prizes on order, 5 2 meter xceivers, table renting is lagging behind last year, push at next meeting, will be a food vendor in the back of the building.

Field Day: No Report

PIO: (KN4AQ) Gary did an interview with WUNC re BPL and announced FCC had released the NPRM the previous day. NPRM upheld current Part 15 regulations and added stipulation that ID be included on carrier. We are to inform W4FAL of any interference problems.

Education: (AC4ZO) Jeff is teaching a group from our general class code and hope to have them ready to test at RARS Fest.

Public Service: (K1RCB) Discussed the Odyssey of the Mind, MS Walkathon/Pooch Parade, KG4CXR is handling that, Raleigh Marathon has been cancelled, CCHH can't handle a ps event and has approached RARS to handle

ARRL: (K4HF) reports that most active hams seem to be pleased with the ARRL proposal on license restructuring.

Repeater: All RARS machines seem to be operating satisfactorly.
At Large: No Report

Old Business:

NI4S reported that there is a problem with the W0UCE remote HF station proposal. Seems that Jack is discouraged at the progress made to date. Project needed a champion.

New Business:

Spam: No Report

Awards Committee: (K4HF) Greg will pick up plaques. Committee will be polled to see if awards are appropriate. W8HYD will try to contact founding members re awarding life membership for those founders still active as hams.

Meeting Food Distribution: (W8HYD) has a problem with the food for meetings due to work schedules. John, KG4ZVT, will pick up meeting supplies for the 3rd meeting of the quarter, Tim, W4NOT, will pick up food for the 1st. meeting of the quarter. W8HYD will do his best for the second meeting. Filet Mignon anyone?

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Dick Bitner, W8HYD Acting Secretary

THANKS FOR ANOTHER GREAT RARSFEST

RARSfest 2004, the 32nd Annual RARSfest, is in the records as another great success. Attendance dropped by less than 6% compared to an average of 8% per year since 1996, and even that is better than most hamfests have been experiencing in recent years. And that is the only negative! We improved on RARSfest 2003 on several fronts. We had to add dealer booths, we nearly sold out of tables in the flea market, and we had problems fitting all the vendors in around the dealers – but that's a good problem to have. The final tally isn't in yet, but it looks like the financial results will be about as last year's hamfest, or slightly better.

But the numbers aren't what really determine if a hamfest is a success. From everything I have heard – EVERYONE enjoyed this year's hamfest. If you listened to the various repeaters around town you had to hear folks talking about how good the hamfest was this year. I heard at least two people on repeaters say it was the best hamfest they had been to in years. I received email from folks who attended the hamfest saying how great it was – two were from officials at other hamfests. I always try to speak to as many of the dealers and vendors as I can after the hamfest is over. This year the least positive comment was "good hamfest" – the rest were all great, terrific, super, etc. These are the things that tell us our hamfest was a success.

Why is RARSfest such a success? What makes everyone like it so well? I think the secret is making sure those attending the hamfest enjoy themselves. And the credit for that goes to the RARS membership that volunteers their time to help put on the hamfest. Without the support of the members we couldn't have such a great hamfest. From the smiling face that sells the admission ticket, to the assistance given by those working security, to.....well to everyone who helps out with the work. Everyone who pitched in should feel proud of the fruits of their labor – you did a G R E A T J O B !.

I need to say special thanks to the hamfest committee who gave of their time for 6 months to put everything together. Jeff Wittich took on one of the really big jobs again this year – pre-registration and flea market. This is one of the toughest jobs, starting months before the hamfest and building up to enough work to qualify as a second job by the last couple of weeks before the fest. Jeff pulled it off like a pro –great job.

Also starting long before the hamfest, Chuck, Littlewood makes arrangements for facilities at the hamfest, advertises the hamfest in the local newspapers, lines up the meetings and forums, and works with our dealers.

A big thanks also goes to Bernard Blackmon for getting everything and everyone in place before the hamfest started. Somehow he seems to know what everyone in the Dealer/Vendor area needs before they even get there – and when someone unexpected show up he always finds a place for them.

And how about Mary Jo Littlewood – she put on another fine feed for everyone on Saturday night. This is one of the biggest hits of the hamfest. I hear more compliments about the Saturday Social than any other facet of the fest. The dealers really appreciate it and RARS members get to enjoy some close fellowship also.

This year we had an added attraction after the social. There were over 30 new members passing the initiation into the prestigious Royal Order of the Wouff Hong late Saturday night. This ceremony can only be held at an ARRL State or Division Convention. Thanks to Jeff Wittich for organizing this event also.

Security and Admissions are the largest crews. Andy Peterson handled admissions again this year and Ron Ford added a professional touch to the security crew. If you worked at the hamfest you probably assisted one of these groups.

The VE team led by Joe and Liz White turned up another fine new crop of ham radio licensees. Maybe they will be available to help with RARSfest 2005.

Bob Conder handled the contests again this year – Homebrew, QLF, and QBH. Those members who attended the April meeting got to see a video recording Bob brought showing some QBH activity from this years hamfest.

The RARS table was available again this year providing a consignment sale service for our membership. I even found my largest purchase at the table. Let's give a big round of applause to Larry Holt and Bob Breyer for managing this valuable service to our members.

And thanks to Cyndi Pearce who was back this year complete with pink roller-blades working the information table, and to her Old Man Gary who managed the stage. Both jobs were well done - thanks to both of you.

Bruce Buck kept the traffic headed in the right direction from the Talk-In booth. Bruce had his hands full this year keeping up with the gate changes made by the fairgrounds – Thanks for another good job Bruce.

And when everyone else was gone – disappeared, eating and relaxing – the Dumpster Divers took over. Kerrell Watts and his crew get the dubious job of literally cleaning up after us.

Through all of this, and for the months surrounding the hamfest, Glen Clary and Greg Seamster keep the bills paid, and keep our books and checking account in order.

And thanks to Tim Nicholson who as co-chair took some of the load off of me this year.

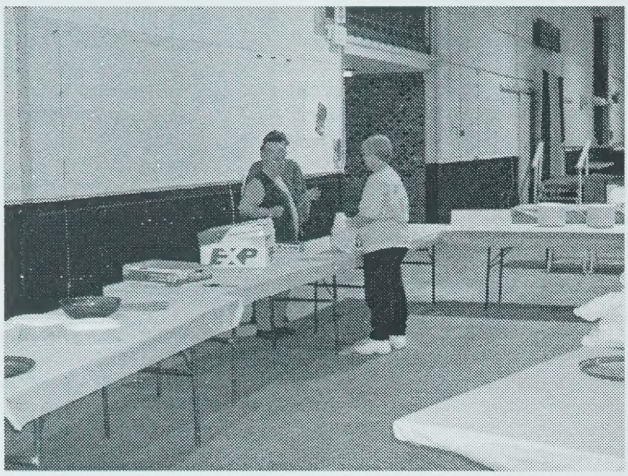
I wish I could personally thank every one of you who helped to make this year's fest another successful one. If you, the members, did not pitch in to help out we could not possibly put on a show like RARSfest.

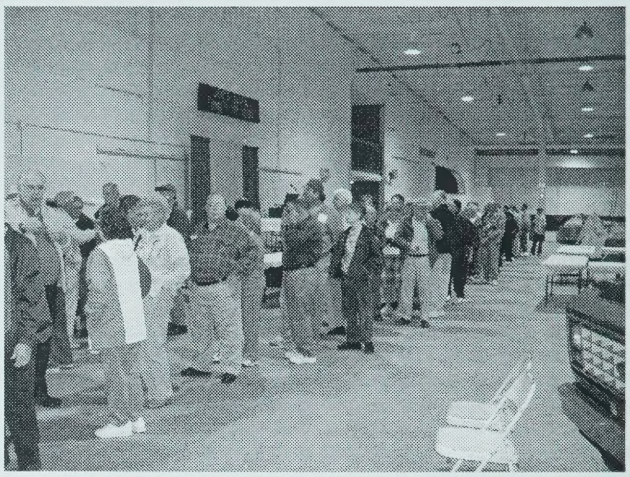
If you have any suggestions for RARSfest 2005, or if you want to become more involved yourself – drop me an email at K4HM@arrl.net or give me a phone call at 577-1254.

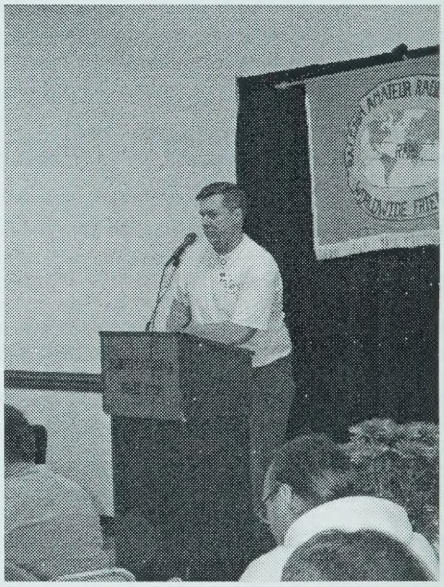
Again – thanks to everyone for a great RARSfest 2004.

Hank – K4HM

RARSFEST SOCIAL







Photos by Denyse KG4CXR

RARSFEST COMMENTS

RARSfest was good to me ... getting together the night before was great!

And, obtaining my Extra was the icing on the cake. I did pick up a Heil Traveler for the Icom 706 mkII g and an HF/VHF/UHF power/SWR meter.

But, as the RARSfest was nearing its end, Jeff Wittich and Jim McRight were 'helping' me to assess a 756 PRO II. As in the commercial where a devil is on one shoulder and an angel is on the other, Jeff & Jim were BOTH pushing to buy (so, who is the devil in this scenario?). Fortunately, I remembered that purchases of such magnitude should FOLLOW filing of taxes, so cooler heads prevailed. BUT, it is a very nice radio!

Rod KI4DCN

****

I thought the RARSfest this year was a good one. There seemed to be a lot of people in the aisles most of the morning. I spent my budgeted money and saw several bargains I would have purchased if I'd had a bit more to spend.

I needed a new battery for my HT after 9 years of use (!!) and found a man and wife selling batteries from the same company the good one had come from so bought from them. That was my "big" purchase for the day and with 2700mAh vs. 1200 for the old battery I should be in much better shape for all day public service events. There wasn't much antique or military material for sale but that is the usual situation. I did buy one piece of 1935 test equipment for a friend of mine who was not there, a WW II bomber antenna reel and two hard to find spare transmitting tubes for my WW II jeep radios. Those three finds were very nice but the purchase that I will use and enjoy the most is a set of used Apple Pro speakers for my Power Mac G4. They were $10 at the fest, list price of $59. What a huge improvement in sound quality over the Altec powered speakers I have been using! I was not able to attend any of the conference sessions since I was working with the Security Team from 10 until 1 and had to leave by 1:30.

All in all an enjoyable experience.

And speaking of enjoyable experiences, just a reminder that the CARC Swapfest Saturday July 17 will have the all new parking ramp available for the ground floor outdoor but covered flea market as well as for "upstairs" parking with elevators to help you bring those boat anchors to your cars. We hope to see you all there.

73,
Clare N2RJB
CARC President

The RARSfest was great. I could not attend the previous two years, so I was long overdue.

I enjoyed helping with ticket sales. It was a little chilly at the roll-up door.

I had the opportunity to meet some Hams that I have been wanting to meet for a several years.

I purchased a few "small" project items, nothing major.

73's
KD4BFH
David

****

My wife (KA2SBC) and I (WA2SRY) sat across from you at the social Saturday and thoroughly enjoyed it there are sure some good cooks down south. I also worked 6-8 on the west door with a fellow named Sam, what a fine gentleman, I don't know his call, but I sure will remember him.

Larry WA2SRY
Durham, NC

****

Waiting at the door to get into the RARSfest

Photo by Gary KN4AQ)

RARSFEST COMMENTS CONTINUED

Wouff Hong Chills Hearts Of Men

In a terrifying exhibition deep in the night of April 3, the dreaded Wouff Hong once again instilled fear into the hearts of the 34 hams who endured the pain of laying eyes on its menacing form. Having been in secured storage for the last six years, the "Keepers of the Crypt" decided that the time had come for the Hong to make another appearance.

The Wouff Hong is an instrument of torture that is used on hams who engage in certain types of lid-like behavior on the air. It is wielded by The Royal Order of the Wouff Hong, that band of secret guardians who watch over our hobby.

In a rare Initiation Ceremony into the Royal Order, 34 new inductees underwent an ordeal so fearsome, that few will ever even mention it, and none will describe it. It will be at least two years before the Initiation Rite is performed again in Raleigh. By then, the scars will have healed, and the time may be ripe for the Wouff Hong to once again make an appearance.

Now, for those of you who attended the Rite, I just wanted to let you know that the goat is resting peacefully, and we have reached an agreement with the building owner concerning the ceiling. And although the pickup truck incident is regrettable, all in all, I think things went pretty well. I'll look forward to seeing you all on the "other side" in two years when we induct the next group of... uh, applicants.

73.
Jeff, AC4ZO
Scribe for the Supreme Council, ROWH

Gathering before the Council

Photo by Denyse KG4CXR

Two Weeks, Two Hamfests, Two Tired Dogs

I Walked my feet off on March 27-28 at Timonium, at The Greater Baltimore Hamboree and Computerfest, where I managed vendor sales and the Exhibition Hall Commercial Vendors. Then, to decompress and relax, I made the trek to Raleigh for RARSFest. I always look forward to the RARS event for a lot of reasons, most important to me are 1) I get to see my brother, AC4ZO, 2) I get to see all my NC friends I've made over the last 7 years, like KN4AQ, KG4CXR, KG4CXW, AD4UL, K4HF and everyone else, too numerous to mention, 3) I get to see the vendors who supported Timonium, so I can thank them in person and 4) I get to be at a hamfest where I don't have to make any decisions, I'm allowed to do most any task I volunteer for, and nobody yells at me.

I didn't get to shop much, which is just as well, as the budget can't handle the dent right now. I did manage to buy my first Yeasu, a tri-band HT from Dwight at Communications HQ. I got the model VX-5R just as soon as he had his credit card machine up and running on Saturday evening. This palm-sized HT charged up in about 5 hours. It's got 6 & 2 meters and 440 on it. I think I'm going to use it at work so I can cross-band repeat through my car onto my local 2 meter repeater.

Saturday's highlights were, of course, the social, RARS folks can cook GOOD! and the Wouff Hong induction. Jeff did a fantastic job organizing and directing this most wonderful event. If you weren't there, then plan on being there in two years time, hopefully, we'll do it again.

Sunday had two highlights for me. The first was being able to participate in the test session. Joe and Liz White are very kind to me, and working with them and the rest of the VE team is always a pleasure. It's a real thrill to me to see the youngsters that pass their first ham exam. I got to talk with Charlotte, who is in the 8th grade, from Chapel Hill, after she passed her Technician exam. The second highlight was the "meeting after the meeting", where several of us went out to dinner after the hamfest. This is always good for a few stories. A nice brief nap before the dinner made for a most pleasant evening.

The surprise for the weekend was on Monday morning, as I was making my way through Richmond and chatting on the 146.88 repeater up there. I got a call from a RARS member that is living not far from me here in Baltimore, so we enjoyed a 2 hour simplex mobile QSO and lunch together on the remainder of the trip home.

I certainly appreciate all the kindness and friendship that everyone in RARS and in NC section management show me whenever I visit. I'm honored that so many remember me. Thank you, and 73 to all.
Doug N3VEJ
Baltimore

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First Experiences

After a visit to Jeff Wittich's ham shack, my grandson and I initiated self study for obtaining our Technician licenses at Jarsfest. While my grandson, Alex, will re-test at Rarsfest, I obtained my license in November. At the suggestion of Gary Pearce, my first equipment purchase had been a Kenwood tri-band HT, but I soon sought additional equipment. An Icom 2100H and Icom 706 MkIIg soon followed. The initial base antenna was a multi-band discone. As I listened to the HF bands, I wondered how people could think the bands were crowded.

My initial plan to upgrade the base HF antenna focused upon a sloper .. taking advantage of the terrain and property line. But, Jeff & Gary, upon arrival to assist quickly discounted MY plan in favor of two VERY TALL trees that would enable a 135' dipole to reside about 40' above the 3 story house which is located on a hill 30' above grade (So, it's really UP there!)

But, it's HOW that antenna got up that is a thrill. Watching Jeff with a bow & arrow and Gary with the fishing rod to clear the targeted treetop yet drop beside the targeted tree without entangling in nearby trees. It was like watching artists at work!

The fishing lines connected to weed-eater line; the weed-eater lines connected to the insulators holding the dipole ends. Within moments we were on the air. Gary made quick work of tuning the Ic-706 and LDG Z-100 on all bands before he made contacts on an island in the Mediterranean and in a suburb of Seattle (2 PM). Suddenly, the bands WERE crowded. Now, I could listen to HF while I studied for code and the written General.

Many in RARS had pursued the General via a series of classes. Although I had planned to pass element 3 at RARS in February, I chose to postpone taking the test until Alex was ready for Technician. But, then an opportunity presented itself …

Jeff had offered to conduct code class for those 'Generals' that passed at RARS in Feb. I jumped at the chance; although, I had long-ago established code as a barrier to real amateur radio. But, there I sat in Jeff's kitchen … some days better than others … learning morse code. Between Jeff's code files, WIAW on-air code practice, and G4FON I was able to do reasonably well. I did sneak off to the Kinston hamfest to take the code test, thinking it would be another practice session for Rarsfest. But, I passed … and now I'm a General!

My first contact as /AG was to northern Michigan … answering a CQ call. It's great fun, and I'm looking forward to all of my code partners earning their General privileges soon.

But, I have to say it's so much easier transitioning into 'ham-dom' with the encouragement, support, and assistance from experienced hams. I'm very appreciative of the help that I've received, and I hope someday to be in a position to do the same for a new ham … possibly my grandson, Alex.

Rod KI4DCN

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SKYWARN

The Central Carolina Skywarn Net Meets Tuesdays at 9:15 PM on 146.88 Repeater

Remember to give damage reports AFTER the storms as well as DURING the storms.

SKYWARN DINNER:

The next Skywarn dinner will be Sunday, April 25, 2004 at the El Rodeo Restaurant at 6:30. If anyone would like to be a Skywarn net control operator, please contact Denyse KG4CXR@nc.rr.com or Bob Wx4MMM@arrl.net for details

Skywarn radar class was held on Thursday, April 8, 2004. Jeff Orrock showed how storms can hide behind each other and radar doesn't always pick them up. Spotters are very important for information regarding safety to the public.

March 28, 2004 Skywarn dinner was held at the El Rodeo Restaurant. From left to right: Denyse KG4CXR, Byron K4NGJ, David KF4VXJ, Bob WX4MMM, Rick A9JF, Hank K4HM, Selene KG4RMT, EC John K4JVP Photo by Jim KG4FIJ

DID YOU KNOW.....

There is a dinner once a month, known as the RARS Dinner, where hams and non-hams get together to eat, socialize and become better acquainted.

Are you looking for a ham-related activity that your spouse, date, or family can participate in, even if they don't want to be an amateur radio operator? This is it. Do you want to meet interesting, likeable people in a nice environment? This is for you.

Come join us on the 4th Tuesday of each month. We are currently meeting in the private dining room at the Golden Corral, 6129 Glenwood Avenue. People start arriving around 6:30 P.M., and things usually wind down by 8 P.M. or so. You can come whenever it's convenient for you. This gathering is open to anyone, RARS and non-RARS members, adults and children alike. Hope to see you there.

HAMFEST CALENDAR

May 14-16	DAYTON, OH
May 15	Williamston, NC
May 29	**Durham, NC**
June 5	Winston-Salem, NC
June 26-27	**FIELD DAY**
July 3	Salisbury, NC
July 17	**Cary, NC**
July 31	Roanoke, VA
July 31	Waynesville, NC

SOUTHEASTERN REPEATER ASSOCIATION 146.88 MEMBER

Courtesy of the SERA Repeater Journal

The RARS
Exciter May 2004
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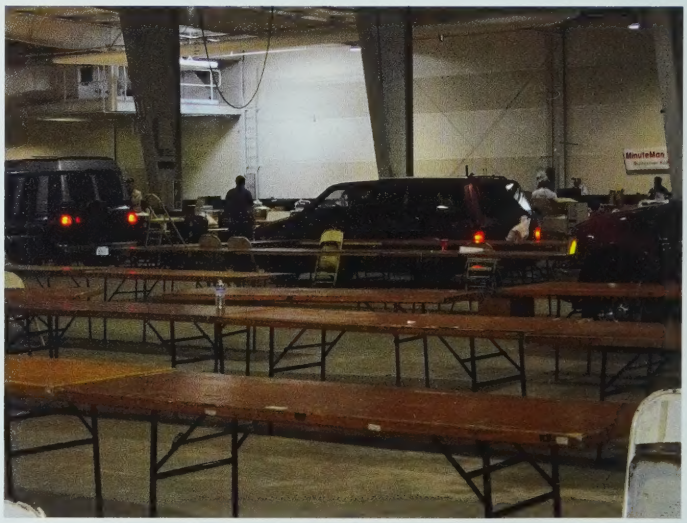
RARSFEST 2004 END OF THE DAY

Doug N3VEJ After a long hard day this is the best way to finish reading the newspaper. He comes from Baltimore to help every year with the hamfest. Doug is Jeff AC4ZO's brother. Thank you DOUG!!



At 4:00 or a little before the vendors can pack up and head for home. Several vans come in at the same time and there's no traffic cop to guide them around tables and other vendor tables. It's a great sight to watch.

Photos by Denyse KG4CXR